



The 2026 Charity Challenge Pairs

Friday 13th March

We are raising funds for two support Charities again this year - [Mind](#), that wonderful charity supporting people with mental health problems, and [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) ... the work they do is just amazing. Please help us raise lots of lovely funds for them.

Last year you managed to raise over £11,000 in total which was just amazing and incredibly generous of everyone. If you haven't already done so, please [click here to go to the page](#) that gives you all the information. And if you want to send a cheque or pay by bank transfer please note the change of bank account !

July sees our [Summer Charity pairs](#) for Kidney Research UK and the British Heart Foundation and then of course there will be the [Children in Need Pairs](#) in November – well we couldn't NOT run that could we !

Do join us for some of these events if you can – it's lovely to see lots of people joining in and we love to have your company.

We do hope you have enjoyed the event - thank you so much for joining us and please do so again in future !

Board 1. None Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ J 7 ♥ 9 6 4 2 ♦ A K 9 5 3 ♣ 4 3</p> <p>♠ 10 8 5 3 2 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A K 5</p> <p>♠ K Q 4 ♥ Q 10 ♦ J 8 ♣ J 10 9 8 6 2</p>	<p>♠ A 9 6 ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ 10 6 4 2 ♣ Q 7</p>
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This is a partscore hand with 2♠ making +140 being a good result for E/W. The top score for N/S in defence will be holding E/W to 8 tricks. N/S do appear to have 5 tricks with 2 diamonds, 2 spades and a losing heart finesse for declarer. However at many tables the defence will cash two top diamond tricks immediately setting up the ♦10 for a later heart discard.

After North leads a high diamond the best defence is to switch a small heart now declarer will frequently get the hearts wrong. It is good declarer play to seek extra chances before trying a simple finesse which might lose.

Declarers who play a second round of diamonds themselves are rewarded when the fall of the ♦J sets up the ♦10 and their 9th trick.

As declarer look for extra chances in your side suits, the finesse can wait.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East

<p>♠ 10 7 3 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ K 10 9 4 2</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ A Q J 9 7 2 ♦ A 9 7 5 ♣ A J</p> <p>♠ A K 4 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ Q 8 7 6</p>	<p>♠ Q J 8 6 5 ♥ 8 6 3 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ 5 3</p>
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Whether South opens a strong NT or 1♣ East will usually play in 2H. If any West shows support with their shapeless 9 loser hand East will drive to game. E/W +140 will be the normal result. With smart play East make 10 tricks on the normal ♣4 lead.

Declarer will know or expect the ♥K to be onside. If the ♥K is doubleton then 10 tricks will be made. However if South has ♥Kxx then we don't have enough entries to dummy to finesse hearts twice. Now notice that declarer

has extra chances in spades and diamonds especially if N/S play the suits first. In addition a 3rd round of clubs gives you a ruff and discard.

After the club lead declarer wins ♣A and simply exits with ♣J. Now when North wins ♣K the defenders will inevitably give declarer a 10th trick. A heart gives declarer 6 trump tricks. A club gives a ruff and discard. If North switches a diamond West wins and plays a spade endplaying South. If North switches a spade then South is again endplayed when they win the trick. 10 tricks made and a top score.

Let the defenders help you when you declare tricky contracts. Give them a certain winner and await their next play with interest.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South

♠ Q 8 6 3 2	
♥ A Q 7 6	
♦ 10 7 2	
♣ 6	
♠ 4	♠ A 10
♥ 10 9 5	♥ K 4 2
♦ A K Q J 4	♦ 8 5 3
♣ Q 9 5 3	♣ A K J 7 2
	♠ K J 9 7 5
	♥ J 8 3
	♦ 9 6
	♣ 10 8 4

On a spade lead E/W have 11 tricks available in 3NT and can make a slam in either minor. The vulnerability and the 10 card spade fit will allow N/S to try to bully E/W.

West opens 1♦, North overcalls 1♠ and East bids 2♣ natural and forcing. Now the first decision falls to South. E/W clearly have a vulnerable game and aggressive Souths will bid 4♠ citing the Law of Total tricks mantra 'bid to the level of your trumps'. West has little choice now but to bid 5♣ passed back to East for the crucial decision.

East, with spades stopped, knows that 3NT is making with overtricks. West is likely to have a singleton spade. 5♣ will score poorly perhaps 25%. Invest this 25% by bidding 6♣ now you will get 95%+ if the slam makes or 5% if slam fails.

If you find yourself in 5 of a minor and know that 3NT making is a good alternative contract consider bidding the minor suit slam.

Board 4. All Vul. Dealer West

	♠ 7	
	♥ J 9 8 6	
	♦ A K Q 10 9 3	
	♣ K 7	
♠ Q 6 3		♠ K 9 4 2
♥ 10 4		♥ A K Q 2
♦ J 7 5		♦ 4
♣ Q 10 9 4 3		♣ A 6 5 2
	♠ A J 10 8 5	
	♥ 7 5 3	
	♦ 8 6 2	
	♣ J 8	

E/W make 4♣ for +130. If North gets a spade ruff then their ♣K falls later so no trick is gained.

A typical auction contains an instructive point. North opens 1♦ and East makes a takeout double. South bids 1♠ and West can bid 2♣ showing 5 to 9 points. North rebids 2♦ and West supports to 3♣. Now some Souths although vulnerable might be tempted to bid 3♦ which is passed back to East. With extra values and no clear bid East should make a competitive double of 3♦. West has only winning choices now they can defend 3♦-1 and get a top with +200 or bid a making 4♣.

After partner doubles and the opponent on your right bids you can pass with a weak hand 0 to 5 points or you can make a 'free bid' as West did here showing a good 5 to 9 points.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North

	♠ 8 5 2	
	♥ 9 8 6 5 4	
	♦ A J 7	
	♣ 8 3	
♠ Q J 6		♠ K 10 7 3
♥ A Q J 3 2		♥ K 7
♦ Q 10 8 4		♦ K 9 5
♣ 9		♣ 10 5 4 2
	♠ A 9 4	
	♥ 10	
	♦ 6 3 2	
	♣ A K Q J 7 6	

Both sides can make a low level contract E/W 2♥ +110, N/S 2♣ +90. Making these contracts will score well for declarer.

South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1H. North passes and East bids 1NT hoping that their ♣10xxx half stop proves to be a full stop.

South bids 2♣ and West rebids 2♦. Now E/W will stop in 2♥ which makes despite the bad break in hearts. Against 2♥ Norths club lead forces declarer early and wins trump control. However West is able to scramble 8 tricks with the spades lying well.

Play your one level overcalls as showing 7 to 17 points. Only overcall with 7 to 9 points if you have a good suit

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East

♠ A 10 7 6	
♥ J 10 9 4	
♦ K Q	
♣ 9 5 2	
♠ K Q J 8 3	♠ 4 2
♥ K Q 7	♥ 8 5 3 2
♦ 5 2	♦ 10 9 6 4 3
♣ Q 8 3	♣ 7 4
♠ 9 5	
♥ A 6	
♦ A J 8 7	
♣ A K J 10 6	

South opens 1♣ planning to rebid 2♦ a reverse showing 16+ points. West overcalls 1S. Now North will make a negative double showing 6+ points and 4 hearts. When East passes South has a rebid problem. After the negative double the prepared 2♦ rebid is no longer forcing but shows minimum values. A jump to 3♦ would show the extra values but is not forcing.

South with the strong club suit is worth forcing to game. South should rebid 2S, a cue bid of the opponents suit, showing game forcing (GF) values without 4 hearts. Now N/S reach the 3NT game making 10 tricks.

As opener you rebid with a cue bid of the opponents suit to show GF values and ask partner for a stop.

Board 7. All Vul. Dealer South

♠ Q 10 9 7	
♥ Q J 10	
♦ 10 9 3	
♣ 9 7 6	
♠ K 6 5 4 3 2	♠ A J 8
♥ A K 7 4	♥ 8 6 3 2
♦ 5	♦ K Q 8 4 2
♣ A 3	♣ 5
♠ —	
♥ 9 5	
♦ A J 7 6	
♣ K Q J 10 8 4 2	

South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1S. North passes and East bids 2♣ to show spade support with 10+ points or 13+ points without support. South will naturally rebid 3C. Now West should rebid 3♥ showing extra values and East happily bids 4♥ which makes 11 tricks and a top score. Most tables will reach 4♠ which only makes 10 tricks.

Norths who double 4♠ for penalties will regret their action when 4♠ romps home for an absolute top for E/W.

After partner overcalls use the Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB) of openers suit to ask about the strength of partners overcall.

Board 8. None Vul. Dealer West

♠ K J 5	
♥ 8 4 3	
♦ J 8 5	
♣ Q 5 4 3	
♠ A 7 3 2	♠ Q 9 8
♥ 10 2	♥ A 9 5
♦ A 7 4 3	♦ Q 10 6 2
♣ A J 2	♣ K 9 8
♠ 10 6 4	
♥ K Q J 7 6	
♦ K 9	
♣ 10 7 6	

West opens 1NT 12-14 and East invites game which West with an empty 13 points (no 10's 9's or 8's) should decline and play in 2NT. Those fearless Wests who bid game after the invite face an uphill struggle to make 9 tricks.

North may make the standard lead of ♣3 4th best of their longest and strongest. When opponents have game or near game values many experts now favour passive leads such as the ♥8 (Top of Nothing against NT) which on

this occasion would hit partners suit and get the defence off to a superb start.

After the club lead West has 6 tricks on top. Now a good guess in diamonds will get 2 additional tricks with chances to make the ♠Q late in the play.

E/W will score around average for INT+1 +120. Anyone making 9 tricks INT+2 will score 70%+. The top score will be reserved for the fearless and lucky few who bid and make 3NT +400.

If looking for a passive lead against No Trump play 'Top of Nothing' leads. Highest from a doubleton or 3 small.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North

♠ 8 6 5	♠ 9 2
♥ Q 8 6	♥ A J 9 4 3
♦ J 8 5	♦ K 10 6 2
♣ 10 9 8 7	♣ J 4
	♠ K Q J 10
	♥ 10 7 5 2
	♦ 9 7 3
	♣ A K
	♠ A 7 4 3
	♥ K
	♦ A Q 4
	♣ Q 6 5 3 2

The weak no trump will be treated harshly on this Board if South doubles East's INT opening for penalties. North with 9 points has no reason to pull the double. In INTx East has 5 tricks with no sign of a 6th trick anywhere. N/S +500 for INTx-2 will be the top on the board.

How will those playing Strong NT 5-card Majors get on after East opens 1♦ which could be 3. If this is passed out a vulnerable 1♦ contract by East should go down 4 tricks +400 for NS. In practice N/S will play 2♥ for +140 or try and fail to make 3NT their way.

If the opponents are vulnerable and you hold good trumps pass in 4th seat rather than balance in.

Board 10. All Vul. Dealer East

	♠ 2	
	♥ J 10 9 5	
	♦ A Q 4 3	
	♣ 8 7 6 4	
♠ A Q J 10 9 8 6 4		♠ K 7 5
♥ K 3		♥ Q 8 7 2
♦ J 6		♦ 10 5 2
♣ 10		♣ A K 3
	♠ 3	
	♥ A 6 4	
	♦ K 9 8 7	
	♣ Q J 9 5 2	

An easy 4♠ for E/W with South on lead after West transfers to spades. The ♣Q lead allows a diamond to be discarded making 4S+1 +650 and a 65% score. An anti-percentage diamond lead by South holds declarer to 10 tricks.

When you make the normal lead and opponents get an extra trick don't worry about it. It will happen frequently at other tables. Focus on the next board.

Board 11. None Vul. Dealer South

	♠ K 9 6	
	♥ J 3	
	♦ A 9 8 5 2	
	♣ A J 5	
♠ 8 5		♠ 10 3 2
♥ 10 9 6 5 2		♥ K Q 4
♦ Q 10 6 4		♦ J 7 3
♣ 9 3		♣ K 7 4 2
	♠ A Q J 7 4	
	♥ A 8 7	
	♦ K	
	♣ Q 10 8 6	

An easy 4♠ for N/S which makes 11 tricks for an average score with little to the play. Every now and then South will attempt 3NT. This makes 11 tricks and a huge top if you escape a heart lead. However the fun ends if E/W lead a heart and you are held to 10 tricks and a rotten score.

Play with the room in the normal contract unless you have a good reason not to.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West

♠ A Q J 6 2 ♥ Q 7 ♦ A Q 6 3 2 ♣ A	♠ 9 8 3 ♥ K 4 ♦ J 10 9 8 ♣ K 9 4 3
♠ 10 5 ♥ A J 10 9 8 5 ♦ 7 ♣ Q 10 7 6	♠ K 7 4 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ J 8 5 2

N/S will play 4♠ making 10 tricks when trumps break 3-2 and you lose a slow diamond trick to East.

Some of the better declarers will make 11 tricks for a 90%+ score. Do you want to know how they did it?

Let's say East leads ♥K after partner has opened a weak 2♥. North ruffs the 3rd heart high with ♠J. Draw two rounds of trumps small to ♠K then back to ♠A. If diamonds are 3-2 then all plays lead to 11 tricks. If diamonds are 4-1 then it makes sense to play two rounds of diamonds before drawing the 3rd trump. Play small to ♦K and back to ♦A. If the defender with one diamond ruffs in you lose nothing and make 10 tricks since you have a trump in dummy should you need to ruff diamonds good. If the defender with a singleton diamond cannot ruff in then you simply ruff your 4th diamond as East follows helplessly.

Make a plan as declarer to play the whole hand. On some hands you will need to establish your key side suit before drawing all the trumps.

Board 13. All Vul. Dealer North

♠ Q 8 7 6 ♥ K Q 5 4 ♦ Q 10 7 2 ♣ 10	♠ A K ♥ A J 10 8 ♦ — ♣ A K Q J 8 7 2
♠ 5 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ A J 9 6 4 3 ♣ 6 5 4	♠ J 10 9 4 3 2 ♥ 9 3 ♦ K 8 5 ♣ 9 3

A bidding test for E/W with 6♣ +1370 a superb contract. Alternative contracts such as 3NT+2 will be average. 5♣ contracts will score very poorly. East has a huge hand with 10+ tricks and a void in diamonds. How should it be bid?

Everybody will start with 2♣ GF. I suggest the following sequence ...

2♣ GF	2D(relay)
3♣	3♦
3♥	4♣ (clubs agreed)
4♥ (cue bid)	4♠ (cue bid)
6♣ allpass	

Cue bid a side Ace, King or shortage with to show slam interest.

With trumps agreed when you hold a void proceed with cue bids rather than 4NT Blackwood or RKC.

Board 14. None Vul. Dealer East

♠ 7 6 2 ♥ K 9 8 7 6 3 ♦ 6 2 ♣ 9 6	♠ A 8 3 ♥ A Q J 5 4 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ A 7
♠ K Q 10 9 ♥ — ♦ A J 10 9 8 7 ♣ Q 3 2	♠ J 5 4 ♥ 10 2 ♦ K Q ♣ K J 10 8 5 4

3NT by North will make 12 tricks +490 on the ♣J lead for an 85%+ score. If South plays 3NT only 11 tricks are made.

East passes and South opens 1♦. North bids 1♥ and East will now bid 2♣. South may bid 2♦ and now North may find the winning 3NT bid. This keeps East on lead and clubs cannot be led without giving N/S an extra trick with tempo.

Some Souths may pass 2♣ and pass partners reopening double for penalties. They will be rewarded with +500 100% when 2♣ goes 3 off.

Holding a void in partners suit strongly consider defending (and penalty doubling) your opponents contracts.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South

♠ 10 9 2 ♥ K 8 5 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ J 8 6 3 ♠ A Q 8 5 4 ♥ 9 7 ♦ Q 10 9 7 2 ♣ 10 ♠ J 7 ♥ A 6 ♦ A K 6 3 ♣ A K Q 5 4	♠ K 6 3 ♥ Q J 10 4 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ 9 7 2
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South will open 2NT and play in 3NT after a Stayman auction. The spotlight now falls on West. A spade lead knocks 3NT immediately for a top score. The alternative diamond lead allows 3NT to make for a 35% score for E/W.

When you hold a good 5 card or longer suit and side entries the classic advice of lead 4th best of your longest is best.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West

♠ Q J 7 6 ♥ A 10 ♦ 9 8 5 ♣ K J 10 5 ♠ K 10 5 4 3 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ A 2 ♠ A 9 ♥ J 5 4 2 ♦ A Q J 4 2 ♣ Q 3	♠ 8 ♥ K Q 9 7 3 ♦ K 3 ♣ 9 8 7 6 4
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South will play in 3NT a difficult contract for both declarer and the defenders. Declarer has entry problems and many suits to develop. The fortunate position of the ♦K which is doubleton gives declarer 10 tricks since only one diamond finesse is needed. If West leads a spade then declarer should make 11 tricks.

The passive lead of lead of ♥8 by West puts declarer under the most pressure. Careful play still yields 10 tricks.

Lead passively against NT unless you have a better plan.

Board 17. None Vul. Dealer North

♠ J 6 5 ♥ 5 ♦ A Q 6 5 3 ♣ K J 10 7 ♠ A K Q 3 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ K J 10 8 4 ♣ A ♠ 10 8 2 ♥ A K 8 6 4 2 ♦ — ♣ 9 6 3 2	♠ 9 7 4 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ 9 7 2 ♣ Q 8 5 4
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North has an 11 point minimum with very good suits and should open 1D. South bids 1H. West with 17 points has no good bid and passes. North rebids 2♣ South now has an interesting dilemma pass partners 2♣ rebid (which makes for +90) or try the higher scoring 2♥ contract. On this layout 2♥ goes one down.

If West balances in with 2♠ they go down when North leads ♥5 and South cashes two hearts and gives North a ruff with ♥8 suit preference for a diamond return.

Majors only score better than minors when the contract makes !

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East

♠ 7 6 3 ♥ K 7 ♦ A 9 7 6 5 4 ♣ A Q ♠ Q J 10 2 ♥ Q 9 8 6 2 ♦ Q 2 ♣ K 2 ♠ A 9 5 4 ♥ A J 10 4 ♦ 3 ♣ J 10 6 5	♠ K 8 ♥ 5 3 ♦ K J 10 8 ♣ 9 8 7 4 3
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North opens 1♦ and rebids 2♦ over Souths 1♥ response. South has a close decision now and many will bid 2NT which leads to 3NT failing by 1 trick. You can ignore double dummy analyser's suggestion that 3NT makes since their 9 tricks includes the unnatural play of running ♥J past Wests ♥Q.

I believe that a pass of 2♦ will often get the best score at pairs. 2NT is a reasonable alternative but partner is likely to bid on. With only 1 diamond treat the hand as a misfit and stay low.

With no opposition bidding don't bid close games in pairs when you have a misfit with partner.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South

<p>♠ K 9 6 4 ♥ A 5 4 2 ♦ J 5 ♣ 9 6 3</p> <p>♠ A 8 5 ♥ J 3 ♦ A 10 6 3 2 ♣ K 8 4</p> <p>♠ Q 10 7 2 ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ A 7 5</p>	<p>♠ J 3 ♥ K 9 8 7 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ Q J 10 2</p>
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West opens a weak NT and East invites game via Stayman and then settles in 2NT. N/S can knock 2NT with a heart lead when declarer plays low and South wins the ♥Q. Now a spade switch from South sets up 3 spade tricks and leads to 2NT-1.

Declarer can make 2NT if they guess to rise with ♥K at trick 1.

Many expert players try to play in INT or 3NT and avoid 2NT contracts.

Board 20. All Vul. Dealer West

<p>♠ J ♥ A 10 6 5 3 ♦ J 8 4 3 ♣ 10 9 2</p> <p>♠ A 10 8 4 ♥ J 7 ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ K Q 8 5</p> <p>♠ K 9 6 3 ♥ Q 8 ♦ A Q 9 2 ♣ 7 4 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 5 2 ♥ K 9 4 2 ♦ K 10 ♣ A J 6</p>
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This time East opens a weak NT and everybody passes. A INT contract might seem dull to some players but INT is regarded as the most challenging contract for play and defence. Most South's will lead the 4th best ♠3.

East can win ♠J with ♠Q and play a small to ♠8 making 4 spade tricks and INT+1 +120 for a 65% score. After making 4 spades and 4 clubs they might even score the ♥K for an outrageous +150 top.

Once again a passive lead from South ♣7 would be a much better start for the defence and lead to INT by E/W making +90 a good score for NS.

The strong trump players will score well on this hand they play 2♠ by West making +140.

Introduce more passive leads into your practice unless you have a good reason to lead actively.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North

<p>♠ Q J 9 5 ♥ A 8 7 5 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ A 10</p> <p>♠ K 8 ♥ 10 9 4 ♦ K 7 5 3 2 ♣ 7 4 3</p> <p>♠ A 6 4 ♥ K Q 6 2 ♦ 6 4 ♣ J 9 8 5</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 3 2 ♥ J 3 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ K Q 6 2</p>
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This could well be the only flat Board of the set. Everybody will play in 4♥ N/S and make 11 tricks. All leads also come to the same 11 tricks but let's do our analysis.

East on lead against 4♥ has a choice of two leads Active ♣K Passive ♦J

If declarer had shown a strong side suit you would lead actively.

With no useful clues from the bidding either lead could be right .. your guess.

Before you make a lead decide whether you want to defend actively or passively. Now select your lead.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East

<p>♠ A K 8 7 5 3 ♥ — ♦ J 8 3 2 ♣ J 10 4</p> <p>♠ 9 6 2 ♥ 9 8 4 ♦ K Q 6 4 ♣ K 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q 4 ♥ K Q 10 7 5 ♦ A 9 5 ♣ A 9 7</p>	<p>♠ J 10 ♥ A J 6 3 2 ♦ 10 7 ♣ Q 8 6 5</p>
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Playing weak NT North plays 4S. The strong NT players will likely transfer to spades and South will play 4♠.

There are 3 losers for declarer e.g. two diamonds and one club (finesse clubs twice). The opening lead gives the defence a chance to go wrong and allow 11 tricks.

When East leads against 4♠ the ♥A lead gets ruffed and declarer makes an overtrick.

When West leads the busy ♦K loses a diamond trick and again declarer has 11 tricks.

Avoiding these unfortunate leads will hold the declarer to 10 tricks and achieve a 65%+ score for the defence.

A finesse has a 50% chance of success. The double club finesse on this hand will get two tricks 75% of the time.

Board 23. All Vul. Dealer South

♠ 9 5	
♥ A 8 6 2	
♦ Q 8 7 3	
♣ 7 6 4	
♠ K 10 7	♠ A Q J 3
♥ J 7 5 4	♥ Q 9 3
♦ 9 6 5 4	♦ K J
♣ K 9	♣ A Q 3 2
♠ 8 6 4 2	
♥ K 10	
♦ A 10 2	
♣ J 10 8 5	

3NT will be played by E/W. When West plays 3NT a diamond lead will defeat the contract by one trick. If North leads the 2h there is only one remarkable defence to guarantee the defeat of 3NT. Rise with ♥K and switch to ♦10 clearing the way for 3 diamond tricks. If N/S do not setup their diamonds early declarer can get home in 3NT if they guess diamonds late in the play.

3NT by East on South's ♠6 (2nd highest from 4 small) or ♣J lead has fewer chances and will usually fail.

Lead second highest from 4 small (South's ♠6 lead) to help partner distinguish the lead from 4th best.

Board 24. None Vul. Dealer West

♠ —	
♥ J 10 5	
♦ A K 9 7 4 3	
♣ 10 8 4 2	
♠ K J 6 4	♠ A 10 5 3 2
♥ A K 8 7 2	♥ Q 9 4
♦ 10 2	♦ J 8 6 5
♣ A K	♣ Q
♠ Q 9 8 7	
♥ 6 3	
♦ Q	
♣ J 9 7 6 5 3	

After West opens 1♥ North should bid with a weak jump overcall of 3♦ being the popular choice. Now by various routes E/W will play in either 4♥ or 4♠ usually making 10 tricks.

The Double Dummy Analysis highlights that North can defeat 4♥ by West by leading ♦9 to South's ♦Q. South plays ♠9 back and North ruffs. South ruffs the next diamond and then North gets a second spade ruff.

It is a tennis rally after the ♦9 lead followed by 3 ruffs.

When giving partner a ruff signal suit preference for the return you want. in 4♥ North's ♦9 lead and South's ♠9 return are both suit preference for a higher suit return.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North

♠ J 4	
♥ K J 7 3	
♦ 8 3 2	
♣ A K Q 5	
♠ A Q 6	♠ 10 9 5 3 2
♥ Q 10 8	♥ 9 6 2
♦ A J 7 6 4	♦ —
♣ 8 3	♣ J 10 7 4 2
♠ K 8 7	
♥ A 5 4	
♦ K Q 10 9 5	
♣ 9 6	

After 1NT by North 12-14 N/S will play in 3NT with East on lead. A spade by East will quickly establish the suit. Declarer will still make 3NT since East has no side entry for the spades.

3NT making 9 tricks will be normal with an occasional declarer getting a top score for 10 tricks.

With a weak hand it is often a good idea to lead your short suit to try to hit partners suit since they are likely to have side entries.

Board 26. All Vul. Dealer East

♠ J 7 4	♠ Q 10 9
♥ 6 5 4 3	♥ 9
♦ K 10 7	♦ Q J 6 3
♣ K 4 2	♣ A Q 9 8 6
	♠ A K 8 3
	♥ K Q J 8 7
	♦ 8 2
	♣ J 3
	♠ 6 5 2
	♥ A 10 2
	♦ A 9 5 4
	♣ 10 7 5

East opens 1♥ and West raises to 2H. Now the spotlight falls on North as they consider their options.

If North passes E/W make 2♥ in comfort for a good E/W score.

Lacking 4 spades a take out double by North is unattractive.

A 3♣ works well on this hand but is not the best bid.

2NT by North showing both minors is the best bid and N/S will now play in 3♦ for a great score.

Play the unusual 2NT showing interest in the minors in these competitive auctions.

Board 27. None Vul. Dealer South

	♠ 8 6 5
	♥ Q J 7 4 2
	♦ Q J
	♣ J 8 2
♠ 9 3	♠ K Q 10 4
♥ K 10 5 3	♥ 8 6
♦ K 2	♦ 9 8 7 4 3
♣ K Q 10 5 4	♣ A 6
	♠ A J 7 2
	♥ A 9
	♦ A 10 6 5
	♣ 9 7 3

A hand that shows just how potent the weak NT can be especially when non vulnerable. On this hand E/W make INT+I. N/S will generally go two down in any contract they play scoring +100 for E/W. This is less than the +120 E/W make when they play INT.

South opens INT and North bids 2♦ transfer to hearts and South bids 2♥ passed back to East. Most Easts will now pass and score poorly when 2♥ drifts down 2 tricks. Some enterprising Easts may find a take out double which their partner will pass for 2♥-2 +300 and an absolute top.

Play takeout doubles in competitive auctions.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West

	♠ Q
	♥ A K 6 4 3
	♦ J 9 5
	♣ A J 3 2
♠ 10 8 3	♠ A J 9 7
♥ Q 7 5	♥ J 10
♦ A 8 7 4	♦ 6 3
♣ 8 7 6	♣ K Q 10 9 4
	♠ K 6 5 4 2
	♥ 9 8 2
	♦ K Q 10 2
	♣ 5

North opens 1♥ and East overcalls 2C. Whether Norths 2♥ showed 4 or 5 hearts most Souths will bid 2♥ ending the auction.

On lead East must find the trump lead ♥J to stop declarer ruffing 2 clubs in dummy. This holds declarer to 9 tricks 2H+I +140 for NS.

The natural ♣K lead will allow the two club ruffs in dummy and declarer can make 10 tricks for a well played 2♥+2 +170

Lead a trump when you suspect dummy has a side suit shortage.